

English Translation of the Friday Sermon of 30th March 1990 Delivered by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad - Khalifatul Masih IV

Someone, once, asked the Holy Prophet of Islam: when would the Day of Judgement be? The Holy Prophet responded by asking the person what had he done in preparation for it? It is an affectionate reply with deep meaning. One should be more concerned in preparing oneself for it rather than wondering when it would be, in my last sermon I urged members to pray to attain personal relationship with God. Today I want to speak on a few points that can help in preparing oneself to meet God on the Day of Judgement. Everyone will have to appear before God. At that time what preparation would you have made in this world to meet God? What is meant is that one should also establish communion with God in this world by developing a personal spiritual relationship with Him. This is known as *liqa* [communion]. It is not a momentary contact with God like a temporary meeting with a friend. It is an continuous and permanent relationship with God. This subject has been explained by the Promised Messiah, Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, in his books and discourses. A state of personal relationship with God involves continuous and progressive connexion with Him. There is no turning back.

Hazrat Mirza Basheeruddin Mahmood Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih, was asked by a cynical philosopher: what would be his opinion of a man who reached his destination in a boat and then continued to sit in it? He replied that if the ocean had an end it would be foolish to remain sitting in the boat; but if it had no end then whoever got off the boat would drown. It would be ruinous to turn away from God after finding Him. If one develops a progressive and spiritual relationship with God one would witness its manifestation in the next life. In the life to-come one's relationship with God is likely to be illumined thousands of times brighter and that will be the reward of a living relationship with God in this life. It would seem as if one is standing before God but, despite that, the relationship of each individual is at a different level. While Moses had a special relationship with God it had no comparison with the level of that of the Holy Prophet. Whatever capacity God has created in man He enabled the Holy Prophet to reach its maximum limit. It was, however, not the limit of God but rather the beginning. God is an infinite Being. However saintly or pious a philosopher may be the wonder of God is beyond imagination without experience. Many things can be imagined without experience but there are also many things which cannot be known without experience. It is possible to have a personal experience of God according to one's capacity anywhere and in all situations. One concept of the omnipresence of God is to be found in all directions of the entire universe. It requires deeper reflection. The meaning of God being everywhere is that wherever one may look and however much one may think, the existence and presence of God is apparent. *Liqa* is a state of personal relationship with God and it should be remembered that to have a relationship with ordinary people is not easily come by. People often remain strangers after meeting one another. Some people cannot recognise others due to defective eyesight. They pass their lives among people without being able to see them. Sometimes one thinks one knows people well but it is only during the passage of time that their good and bad points become clear to you. Wives often do not know their

husbands and vice versa. Many wives suffer while rendering devoted service to their husbands who, they feel, are oblivious of their good qualities. Those who do not develop finer feelings and good tastes and who are harsh would not experience God during the holy month of Ramadan although they fast. There is no chance of enjoying spiritual experience with God unless one makes a change for the better in oneself. One should endeavour to find and experience God. In the beginning contact would be on a lower level which would, however, arouse a desire for deeper contact and divine experience. The early stages of divine recognition are superficial as they are acquired by intelligent reasoning and deduction only from the signs and wonders in the universe. God says in *The Holy Quran*:

In the creation of the heavens and, the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed Signs for those with understanding.¹

Certainly there are divine signs in the alternation of day and night and in the changing of seasons; but they are discerned only by the intelligent who seeing them in operation remember God. They not only remember God during formal prayers but do so at all times and under all circumstances. This practice flows naturally like running water with no strain or struggle. It becomes a natural habit. One should accustom oneself to see the work and attributes of God in one's surroundings whereby remembrance of Him would grow. There is also the inner study of oneself because by becoming aware of one's soul one finds God. In this connexion there are many kinds of studies. One is the study of the human body. The more the body is studied the more wonderful discoveries are made about it. One can see a glimpse of God in every part of it.

Sometimes I have asked people who understand the functioning of the human body whether they have thought over what they actually are? Is the consciousness of the 'I' the result of physics or chemistry? What is the 'I'? Why should one suffer pain? These are questions which need to be answered. I would answer by asking what physical law causes one to feel unhappy at receiving a look of anger, or pleasure at receiving a loving glance? If one begins to reflect on one's inner self one would see the wondrous hand of God at work. How did the eyes evolve? God has given us something better than the perfect camera. All of their parts were created together and not separately. It is not possible that first the retina be made without any purpose followed by the lens and then the controlling muscles which would render the lens useless if they stopped functioning. One is unable to see when the muscles weaken from age. On reflection one is forced to admit that there must be an external creator as one cannot be one's own creator.

Everything cannot come into existence accidentally without creative intelligence. The deeper one reflects on evolution the more one realises that nothing came into existence by itself but behind it all was intelligence.

One can have some realisation of the existence of God with the use of one's physical eyes by witnessing His signs. The universe reveals the omnipresence of God at all times. After understanding the subject of personal communion and relationship with God the first step towards it is to develop within oneself an awareness of Him. One should develop finer tastes within oneself so that one may experience the presence of God. God has endowed

¹ *The Holy Quran*. Āl Imran [Family of Imran]: 191.

humankind with spiritual insight. God is an intelligent Living Reality and is the source of all life and intelligence.

The Holy Prophet has explained that *liqa* is a state of having a personal spiritual relationship with God. When a person moves towards God then He moves towards that person; and when a person takes one step towards Him He takes ten steps towards that person. If a person walks towards God He runs towards that person.² Only that person finds God who moves fast. As long as one is not aware of the presence of God one cannot enjoy a personal relationship with Him. It would only be a philosophical relationship. Hazrat Musleh Maud [the Second Caliph] has said that one may come to realise the existence of God through intelligence but without revelation one cannot enjoy full light. Had materialists intelligently observed the universal signs of God they would not have asserted that God is dead! They even say that He might have existed but no longer does.

The next step towards establishing a relationship with God is to adorn the temple of one's inner house with virtues and moral values which requires constant attention for progressive advancement. An English writer wrote that once when he entered a shop he saw a beautiful girl and fell in love with her at first sight. She dropped a packet on the floor and he immediately rushed forward, picked it up and handed it to her. She thanked him in a flat and emotionless voice devoid of any feeling. The writer said that he then became sure that love can vanish in a moment just as it can be felt in a moment. Superficial beauty is not sufficient. Love must be deep. One should adorn oneself with love for God even as a poor bride adorns herself according to her circumstances! Everybody, according to their ability can spiritually adorn themselves which would result in God's affectionate attention falling upon them. Even in the early, stages of spiritual development God manifests Himself. God, therefore, blesses everyone who endeavours to develop a personal relationship with Him. With the manifestation of God further reformation continues.

After understanding this subject one should improve oneself. I delivered a long series of sermons in which I laid stress on moral values regarding such matters as financial dealings, treatment of wives and treatment of husbands, courteous conversation etc. with the view that members of the Community should adopt these virtues as the Community enters its second century. In actual fact the observance of these principles which I expounded are not meant for any particular century but should be observed at all times in all centuries. They are of everlasting importance. If one does not experience divine enjoyment one is unable to advance spiritually and is liable to slip back and become indifferent to righteous living. In order to move closer to God it is essential that one should possess the desire to become more and more purified. One's personal conduct towards wives, husbands, children, relatives, friends and everybody should be proper. Disrespectful informality is a deadly poison. It destroys friendships. We read in *The Holy Quran*:

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. Those who are with him are firm against the non-believers tender among themselves thou seest them devoted and obedient to Allah in seeking His grace and pleasure they bear the impression of prostration upon their faces. This is their description in the Torah. Their description in the Gospel is like a seed that sends forth its shoot, becomes strong then grows thick and stands firm on its stem to the delight of its sowers

² Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj. *Sahih Muslim*.

that He may cause the deniers to burn with rage at them. Allah has promised unto those of them who believe and act righteously forgiveness and a great reward.³

This verse refers to firmness against disbelief. One needs to make a conscious effort in reminding one another that we Ahmadi Muslims should pay special attention to good conduct and behaviour especially during this holy month of Ramadan. All of us should pray that they may develop a permanent relationship with God and purify their hearts.

I further stress the need of paying attention to self-purification which will enable one to witness the presence and mercy of God. At the end of Ramadan one should gauge the spiritual progress one has gained during the holy month of fasting. This progress should continue after Ramadan. It is possible that one might slack in one's efforts but after one has attained a certain standard then there should be no slacking. If one perseveres after slipping from time to time one will eventually reach one's objective. After Ramadan is over you should check yourself whether God is still with you in the same way that you experienced Him during the holy month. If not then my message to you is that you should continue your spiritual struggle. May God grant the members of the Ahmadiyya Community a true understanding of the meaning of *liqa* and may God grant them a lasting and permanent relationship with Himself. The more they attain a closer relationship with God the quicker will the Community be able to bring about a spiritual revolution throughout the world. May God give us the power to do so. Amen.

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³ Al Fat'ha [The Triumph]: 30.